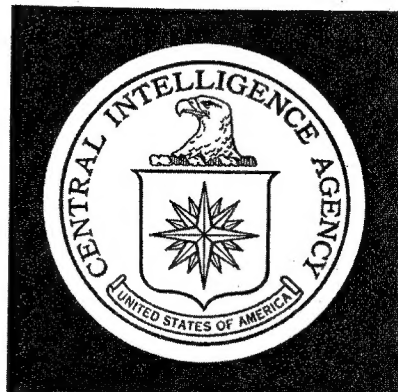


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DIRECTORATE OF
INTELLIGENCE

WEEKLY SUMMARY

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USSR ACCELERATES TESTING OF SS-X-6

The success and rapid pace of the USSR's orbital weapon test program suggest that the initial objectives have been achieved. The SS-X-6, the test vehicle in the program, has been successfully flown five times since 17 July; the most recent flights were on 19 and 22 September.

The SS-X-6 is put into orbit from Tyuratam and makes almost a full revolution before being brought down in south-central USSR. The system is composed of the two-stage SS-9 ICBM booster and a deorbit stage that brings the re-entry vehicle onto its predetermined target.

The energy available from the SS-9 booster gives the system only a limited capability to hit targets in the US on the

first orbit, and then only if the SS-X-6 is flown from the western edge of the USSR, an area not known to have launch facilities for it. Although the system could hit the US on subsequent orbits, its accuracy would be degraded and it would sacrifice surprise--one of its principal advantages. It is possible, therefore, that the purpose of the present series of shots is to test the deorbit stage. The recent string of successful tests indicates that the third stage guidance and orientation problems encountered earlier have been solved.

Improvements in the performance of the SS-9 booster or weight reduction in the third stage or payload must be made if the weapon is to be effective against the US.

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on France--which will not sign the NPT and which, as a nuclear power, would be exempt from the IAEA controls that the NPT would impose.

A new Soviet draft Article III now under consideration is an attempt to meet these problems, at least in part by leaving room for the continuation of the EURATOM system under an arrangement to be negotiated with the IAEA. In a note prepared last week for the Council of the European Communities, however, the Commission indicated that the Soviet draft did not fully meet the EURATOM reservations. The draft was nevertheless welcomed as coming closer to the US position on safeguards.

The difficulties arise from the discrimination within EURATOM that would result from superimposing IAEA's inspection system on all but one of EURATOM's members. Moreover, the Commission, noting its own rights and obligations on safeguards under the EURATOM treaty, observes that it is highly uncertain what role it could play in the negotiations that the Soviet draft envisages between EURATOM and the IAEA.

This uncertainty is complicated by the French opposition to any role for EURATOM "as such," either in deliberations over the NPT or in future negotiations

with the IAEA. Although the Council legally could decide by a majority vote to empower the Commission to negotiate with IAEA, this would be a politically difficult decision. Even before that decision is faced, however, the Five need to adopt a common position in order to influence US discussions with the Soviets.

A first step toward such a consensus, using the Soviet draft as a starting point, was made this week. The Five would like the US and the USSR to agree on a position that would largely answer EURATOM reservations. This would put the French in the position of either compromising on EURATOM's role or taking the responsibility for preventing the Five from signing the treaty. The French will find it difficult to reconcile all of their presumed objectives, which include not obstructing what the Soviets want, instituting further controls on Germany, and preventing a further supranational development of the European Communities through an enhanced role for the Commission.

Both the US and the Soviet Union continue to hope that a generally acceptable Article III can be found before a draft NPT is opened to debate in the UN General Assembly later this fall.

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